

Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

BI-MONTHLY

\$2.00 FOR TWO YEARS

VOLUME 28

JULY — AUGUST, 1957

NUMBER 4

RECENT DENOMINATIONAL STATEMENTS — SELECTED QUOTATIONS

AMERICAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

To speak on relations between the races is a mandate to American Baptists assembled in our fiftieth anniversary sessions. To remain silent now would be to confine in prison the love of God and of His people that motivates us.

... we dedicate ourselves to the following objectives:

1. That membership in each Baptist church shall be open to all people of its community regardless of their race or national origin.

2. That each church shall choose its minister on the basis of character and ability without regard to racial background.

3. That each church shall work to assure equality for all people in education, employment, housing, and political activity.

4. That members of our churches shall base their fellowship with others on individual merit without regard to racial origins.

5. That we shall not align ourselves with any organized group or movement that works to retain segregation whether in country clubs, sororities, fraternities, service clubs, organizations of property owners, the Ku Klux Klan, White Citizen's Councils, and all exclusive groups that deny membership to others on the basis of race.

6. That each Baptist organization, school, home, and hospital shall follow practices that are consistent with clear policies of racial nondiscrimination.

In conclusion, we call upon our Baptist churches to join with other churches to demonstrate interracial understanding and shatter the illusions that engender fear between races. Beyond the present battles over race we envisage an era of harmony, coming in response to the prayers, the thinking, and the Christlike living of many people. (*Resolution by the American Baptist Convention, June 4*)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U. S.

Freedom of Worship

Within the bounds of our own Assembly there seems to exist a striking example of the violation of the right to worship. Members of the Koinonia community near Americus, Georgia, state that their communal life is not primarily a social or agricultural experiment but an experience in worship. They have professed their allegiance to this nation, they have denied affiliation in any subversive party, they have violated no laws and have made a significant contribution to farming techniques in this area. Yet because their experiment knows no barrier of color they are treated as enemies of society. Their property has been strafed, dynamited, and burned; their children maligned, their lives jeopardized. Even worse, many "respectable" citizens of the area have joined in an economic boycott designed to destroy their financial stability and drive them to ruin. The General Assembly would remind the citizens of this area of the danger of trying to destroy those who dare to live by their Christian convictions, even though they may differ from them in their opinions. The General Assembly commends all Christian individuals and

groups in Georgia who have spoken out so strongly against this denial of freedom to worship. Other examples might be given from other areas of attempts to destroy freedom of worship as a basic right of all Americans. The Assembly calls on Christians everywhere to be alert to this grievous threat to freedom of religion.

Freedom to Learn

It is in the Protestant tradition to support the public school system for a free public education as the handmaiden of democracy. Ignorance and prejudice are the weapons of tyranny. . . . Therefore, the General Assembly urges its members to make every effort to maintain an adequate public school system for all elements of its population and to provide proper compensation for its teachers. . . . The General Assembly would call attention to the fact that the Christian faith has never countenanced racial discrimination and that the supreme law of the land requires that it no longer be practiced in the public school system. Therefore, during this period of transition every member of the Assembly is urged to work in his own community for an honest and durable adjustment.

Freedom of Speech

The Christian Church advocates the right of free speech even if the idea expressed be wrong. Freedom of speech involves the right of dissent; yet of late America has been compelled to struggle for this right both within and without her own borders.

Freedom of speech includes the right to register one's opinion through the medium of voting. While it is deplorable that so many of our citizens fail to exercise their franchise, there are many others who are denied the privilege by devious means, such as severe literacy tests, the use of a poll tax as a prerequisite to voting, concealing information concerning the time and place of registration, economic pressure, and threat of reprisal. The price of this corporate dishonesty is political demagoguery in its worst form.

Freedom of Assembly

In many parts of the world people have not the privilege of public assembly except as it is sponsored or sanctioned by the State. This condition is to be deplored and feared. Yet in the United States there are areas in which freedom of assembly is seriously restricted. Where there are groups which would meet on a non-segregated basis, the State sometimes stands in the way. Efforts to maintain the status quo in social patterns and to intimidate those who believe in the right of public assembly to discuss mutual social problems have been made by numerous "citizens" groups formed in many states. To strive to carry out the law of the land and to advocate the same is to incur the enmity of these groups. Perhaps it is in the areas of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly that Christian citizens should give primary attention at this time, for people with full freedom to voice their convictions cannot remain fettered. . . . (Report of the Council on Christian Relations, Presbyterian Church, U. S., approved by the 1957 General Assembly)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U. S. A.

Believing that racial segregation is a problem of such magnitude and urgency that it takes precedence over other social issues in American life today,

Acknowledging that the continuing tensions with regard to race relations expose the faithlessness of the church,

Being convinced that the General Assembly has stated the position of our church so clearly and explicitly that further exhortation can only emphasize the gulf between what we profess and what we do,

The 169th General Assembly

Directs the Department of Social Education and Action to undertake suitable studies and surveys to discover the extent to which racial integration has been achieved in the church and in its agencies and institutions, to develop a comprehensive effective, unified program for the whole church to achieve a non-segregated church and a non-segregated society, and to report to the next General Assembly;

Calls on ministers and sessions of churches, on presbyteries and synods, on the boards and agencies of the church, on Presbyterian-related institutions, to cooperate in this effort to implement the General Assembly deliverances of 1954, 1955, and 1956, which deal with race relations.

Commends the Stated Clerk for his forthright compliance with the directive of the 1956 General Assembly concerning "victims of reprisals" in the Sumter, South Carolina, case (as reported in *Presbyterian Life*, January 5, 1957) and urges him to continue to give such counsel and assistance to "victims of reprisals" as he may judge to be appropriate,

Makes bold to call the members and ministers of the churches to the vocation of suffering for the sake of truth and justice, for "we should not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon us" *when we seek to obey the call of Christ, and to encourage and support one another in bearing witness to the gospel according to which God makes no distinctions as to race or origin.

*I Peter 4:12

(169th General Assembly, Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., May, 1957)

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Credo On Race Relations

We believe that the problem of race is a problem of human relations. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments provide the final authority for all matters of human relations. We believe that all problems of human existence are resolved in the love for God above all, and for our neighbor as ourselves. We further believe that such love has been fully revealed to us in the life and work of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour; and that the grace to participate in that love is readily available through the Holy Spirit by faith. We believe that the primary function of the Church of Jesus Christ is to witness to the love to all people in every walk of life.

We believe that sincere repentance manifests itself in acts of obedient love. We therefore believe that our sincerity will be demonstrated through concrete local acts, such as:

1. identification with minority groups victimized through unjust discrimination.
2. conscientious efforts to open the doors of all churches to all people.
3. the support of those laws and agencies designed to uphold and guarantee the rights and health of all.
4. the promotion of intergroup discussions, where in atmospheres of understanding and goodwill, the forces for reconciliation may operate creatively.
5. the education of our youth in the privileges and responsibilities of life in a free, mixed society.

We believe that Christian love represents the highest criterion for all human relations. In its light, all personal relations are judged; through its power, all tensions in race relations can be resolved. We believe that the

Church exercises its prophetic role when it inspires its constituent society to construct such laws, and when it subjects such laws to the scrutiny of Divine revelation. In that spirit, we believe that the recent Supreme Court decision on the ordered, gradual desegregation of the public schools of our land, represents an effective legal expression of Christian attitudes and convictions at the present time. We believe that we should support and implement the intent and content of that decision. . . .

We believe that the racially inclusive and culturally integrated church represents the highest demonstration of the transforming fellowship of reconciliation which characterizes the Christian fellowship at its best. We believe that where opportunities for such churches exist, conscientious efforts should be made to realize this ideal. We further believe that those who are ministering in these frontier areas of Christian faith and life be actively encouraged and warmly supported.

We believe that racially restricted housing covenants, real or implied, are inconsistent with Christian integrity. We believe that according to Scripture, the rights of property are subservient to the needs of people. We believe that there is nothing inherent in race differences to necessitate the decline in property values. We believe that restrictive pressures and flight-in-panic on the part of dominant groups often lead to unnecessary real estate declines and contribute to the establishment and perpetuation of ghetto-existence. . . . (Adopted by the General Synod of Reformed Church in America, June 7)

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

We appeal to our Baptist brethren, white and Negro, and to other Christian friends, to give careful consideration to the following statement of principles, setting forth, we believe, the truth of the Bible and offered in the spirit of good will and Christian love:

- (1) God created man in his own image. Therefore, every man possesses infinite worth and should be treated with respect as a person.
- (2) Christ died for all men. Therefore, the Christian view of man, every man, must reflect the spirit of the cross.
- (3) God is no respecter of persons. Therefore, prejudice against persons or mistreatment of persons on the grounds of race is contrary to the will of God.
- (4) Christ said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Therefore, Christians are obliged to manifest active goodwill toward all people and to help them to achieve their fullest potentialities as persons.
- (5) Christian love, as exemplified by Christ, is the supreme law for all human relations. Therefore, Christians have the assurance that such love, conscientiously practiced, will resolve tensions and bring harmony and good will in race relations.
- (6) All true Christians are brothers in Christ and children of God. Therefore, they are obligated to cultivate prayerful concern for one another and to show confidence in one another.
- (7) Every person is accountable to God. Therefore, the right of individual opinion, tested by the teachings of Christ, and of freedom to express it, always in the spirit of Christian love should be granted to all and respected by all.

In accordance with principles of our Christian faith, and as free citizens, this Commission protests the violence in all its ugly forms that is being used against the Negro people in the current segregation issue or at any other time. In recognition of the Negro's rights as a citizen of these United States, we call upon the law enforcement agencies of local, state, and national government to protect him, irrespective of his position or culture, from lawless attacks on his person or property.

Moreover, we call upon these law enforcement agencies to protect any other individual or group who seeks to live in a chosen community as free citizens engaged in peaceful pursuits according to their own convictions and conscience.

We believe that our nation cannot long endure these lawless attacks made upon the person and property of free citizens in contempt of the law and the courts of justice. We, therefore,

call upon the law enforcement officers and agencies of community, state, and nation to bring to legal justice the perpetrators of these crimes, regardless of their position or influence in the community.

Furthermore, in keeping with our historic Baptist position on the freedom of conscience and of expression in religion under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we call to the attention of the people in our churches and other citizens of our country the fact that any suppression of these freedoms, whether it be by the laws of state or by economic, civic, social, or church pressures, denies the voluntary principle in religion and imperils both religious and political freedom at its source.

We are witnessing today the betrayal of these freedoms by vocal minorities in some communities and churches who are able to arouse sufficient opposition to force the resignation of pastors and to incite retaliation against peaceful citizens who speak or act according to their convictions on racial justice and interracial goodwill. The people of our region and throughout our land should be reminded that both the voice of God and the verdict of history warn us that those who deny these freedoms to others do not long retain them for themselves. (49th Annual Report of the Christian Life Commission, May 1957)

FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS BILL

The Senate struck from the Administration's civil rights bill today (July 24) all Federal enforcement powers except those to protect the right to vote. . . .

This was done in the adoption, 52 to 38, of a bipartisan amendment taking the heart of Part III out of the bill. Thirty-four Democrats and 18 Republicans backed this amendment.

The focus of the Senate's debate turned at once to the greatest surviving issue — whether jury trials should be granted in Federal contempt actions to protect the right to vote.

Senator Johnson, who controls the order of Senate business as the majority leader, arranged to have put next in line for decision a compromise proposed by Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, a veteran liberal Democrat from Wyoming.

This would grant the right of jury trial in criminal contempt cases but would permit Federal judges sitting without a jury to assess sentences in civil contempt cases. . . .

Part IV of the Administration text would establish this procedure:

The Justice Department could go into Federal Court, with or without the consent of the injured person, for injunctions against deprivation of the right to vote.

Registration or election officials refusing to obey these writs could be tried by the judge, without a jury, and fined or imprisoned for contempt.

The substitute O'Mahoney version would permit this same sequence of events, with the important exception that court proceedings intended to "impose criminal penalties" would be before juries.

Proceedings applying only to civil contempt — directed, that is, simply to require a man to carry out a court decree, would be before the judge alone.

Any person held in civil contempt would be "entitled to be freed from detention upon giving an appropriate undertaking that he will in good faith comply with and not obstruct the carrying out of such injunction, restraining, or other order."

Proponents of this approach explain the distinction in this way:

A man refusing to obey an injunction in a vote case, and consequently put into jail by a judge, could free himself simply by doing what he had been ordered to do.

If, however, he persisted in his refusal, the judge could bring him to book for criminal contempt. At this point, facing now a prison sentence which no change in his own attitude could in itself avoid, he could demand a jury trial.

The all-out civil rights forces are marshalling to resist this compromise to the end. . . .

They contended that the Senate was neglecting basic constitutional rights — such as those of attending an integrated school or serving on a jury — to give guarantees only to one civil right, that of voting. . . . (New York Times, July 25)

[Parts III and IV of the Administration's civil rights bill were mentioned above. Parts I and II provide for the following:

Part I — Creation of a Federal Civil Rights Commission, with power to subpoena records and witnesses, to investigate instances of violations of civil rights and to propose remedies.

Part II — Establishment within the Department of Justice of a special Civil Rights Division. — The Editors]

POLITICS AND CIVIL RIGHTS (An Appraisal By James Reston)

Nobody mentions it in the Senate debate, but the two major political parties are acutely conscious of the political stakes in the current civil rights fight.

Many Republican leaders see in their party's civil rights bill the possibility of breaking the Democratic hold on Negro voters in the Northern cities and extending Republican influence eventually in the Democratic South. . . .

Liberal Northern Democrats are aware of the long-range possibility. They have watched the slow erosion of their party's strength in the last two elections. And they concede that passage of an effective civil rights bill will strengthen this trend, particularly if the Republicans could get more of the stay-at-home Negroes in the North to vote.

This is one reason why the Northern Democratic liberals are pressing for the whole civil rights bill, including part III, which would empower the Attorney General to use civil injunction procedures to speed integration in the public schools of the South.

They know that they will not win this fight, but by refusing to compromise on it they believe they can demonstrate that the Republicans are less eager for a complete civil rights bill than the Democratic National Committee.

There are 35 congressional districts outside the 13 Southern states where Negroes in 1950 formed more than 10 per cent of the population. A Congressional Quarterly study of voting trends in 1952 and 1956 in these districts shows the following:

General Eisenhower got 42 per cent of the vote in 1952 and 47 per cent in 1956. In 1956, Adlai E. Stevenson, the Democratic nominee, got 2,647,112 votes in these districts to the President's 2,347,998. The president's 5 per cent gain compared to his 2.2 per cent rise nationally.

The President carried 13 of 35 districts in 1956, two more than in 1952. . . .

Also, the larger the Negro population in the districts studied, the larger was the President's margin of increase. For example, his largest increase in 1956 over 1952 came in New York's sixteenth District (Harlem) — 16.6 per cent. And his gain in Illinois' first (Chicago) was 10.9 per cent.

This analysis of the Negro vote, however, shows a marked difference between the Republican gains in the Presidential race and the Republican record in the Congressional elections. In these thirty-five districts, as in the rest of the nation, President Eisenhower's record was much more impressive than that of the Republican Congressional candidates, who just about duplicated their marks of 1952.

For example, the Republican share of the House vote in these areas was 41 per cent in both years.

On the basis of these figures, the prospect of any startling change in the voting pattern in the so-called Negro districts of the North is not great for 1958.

Two factors, however, encourage the Republicans. First, in those districts where in 1956 they put on a major campaign, emphasizing that Southern Democratic committee chairmen in Congress were blocking civil rights legislation, the Republican party made impressive gains.

Second, the total vote in these 35 districts decreased as the Republican campaign for the Negro vote increased — a fact that favors the Republicans since a large Negro vote has usually favored the Democrats.

What the Republicans now believe is that, if an effective equal-voting bill is passed at this session, they will be able to claim credit for that fact and wage a really major campaign to bring the Negroes back to the Republican side, where they voted from Reconstruction days to 1932.

This campaign would be waged in precisely those critical states of the North with larger electoral votes where the Democrats have been especially strong since the start of the Roosevelt era.

The Republican party does not expect too much in 1958, for among the thirty-five there are only three Democratic districts and two Republican districts where the margin of victory was 5 per cent or less.

By the Presidential race of 1960, however, the Republicans think they will have time to exploit their civil rights record, not only in the Northern cities but also in the border states and some states of the South — notably Virginia, Texas and Florida.

"Give us an equal-voting-rights bill," one Republican leader said . . . "and by 1960 we will break the Roosevelt coalition of the large cities and the South, even without Eisenhower."

This is what is in the background of the vigorous debate in the Senate. (*The New York Times*, July 24)

FEARS NOT JUSTIFIED

A white congregation quit in a body [recently] on refusing to accept a colored minister as pastor. . . .

The mass exodus occurred at the Normandie Avenue Methodist Church [Los Angeles, Calif.] in an area that has changed from all white to 40-50 per cent Negro.

The pastor the members refused to accept is the Rev. Nelson B. Higgins. Bishop Gerald H. Kennedy appointed him last month, apparently in the hope that a racially-mixed membership would replace the dwindling all-white membership.

However, no Negroes joined the congregation and . . . the 36 active white members quit, leaving a church without a congregation. . . .

The Rev. Mr. Higgins called the wholesale resignation "a greater challenge than ever to rebuild God's house on the ruins of neglect." . . . (*Norfolk Journal & Guide*, July 6)

The Normandie Avenue Methodist Church had the largest congregation in its forty-nine-year history [on July 7th] its first Sunday as an interracial institution. It has been an all-white church.

More than 1,000 worshippers attended the 11 A.M. services. Every seat was filled, and the overflow crowded into the choir room and fellowship hall. Scores sat in the shade of a nearby sycamore and others stood at the entrances.

They came to welcome a new minister, the Rev. Nelson B. Higgins, Jr. . . .

They came, too, to express their approval of Bishop Gerald H. Kennedy's action in appointing a Negro minister to shepherd a previously white flock.

The new congregation was estimated to be about half white, half Negro.

Not everyone who came approved of the action, but a sampling showed that an overwhelming majority did.

Two-thirds of the forty-three members of the congregation had resigned rather than accept the change of pastors. . . . (*New York Times*, July 8)

FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES EVERYWHERE

The newly-elected Governing Body of the International Labor Organization [at] its 136th session [in Geneva, Switzerland] . . . adopted the proposed draft of a Convention and Recommendation aimed at ridding the world of discrimination in the field of employment. This was the first action on this measure. It will be taken up for a final discussion at next year's Conference after circulation to member governments for their comments. The vote on the first reading of the draft convention was 157 for, 37, against, and 17 abstentions.

The convention text calls on ratifying countries to declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote, by method appropriate to national conditions and practice, equality of opportunity and treatment in respect to employment and discrimination.

The convention defines discrimination as follows:

- any adverse distinction which deprives a person of equality of opportunity or treatment in employment and occupation and which is made on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin; and
- such other adverse distinctions affecting a person's employment or occupation as may be specified by the Member concerned after consultation with representative employers' and workers' organization.

The countries ratifying the convention would agree to co-operate with Employers' and Workers' organizations and other appropriate bodies in promoting this policy. Educational programs would be carried out, and laws and administrative practices would be brought into conformity.

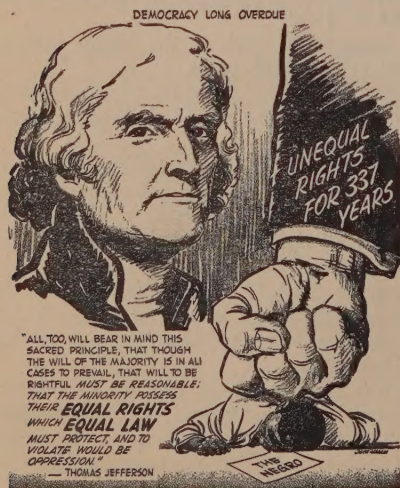
The draft recommendation provides that all persons should enjoy, without discrimination, equality of opportunity and treatment with regard to:

- access to training and employment of their own choice on the basis of individual suitability for such training or employment.
- access to vocational guidance and placement facilities;
- advancement in accordance with their individual character, experience, ability and diligence;
- security of tenure of employment;
- remuneration for work of equal value;
- conditions of work including hours of work, rest periods, annual holidays with pay, occupational safety, occupational health and social security measures, and welfare facilities provided in connection with employment.

The draft recommendation also calls on employers and trade unions not to tolerate or countenance discrimination. . . . (*News Release From International Labor Organization News Service*, June 28)

The matter in these pages is presented for the reader's information. Unless so stated, it is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes or positions of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations or of The National Council of Churches.

Published by the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, Division of Christian Life and Work, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Editors: J. Oscar Lee, Alfred S. Kramer and Geneva R. Jones.



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE
CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.
DEPARTMENT OF RACIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS
297 Fourth Ave. New York 10, N. Y.
Return Postage Guaranteed

Sec. 34.65(e) P.L.&R.
U. S. Postage
PAID
New York, N. Y.
Permit No. 14717

Library
Evangelical Theological Sem.
Naperville, Ill.

INS